AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Brief Listing of Status of Claims

Claims 1, 10, 11, 12 and 17 are Amended.

Claims 3-9 and 13-16, and 20-21 are Previously Presented.

Claim 2, 18 and 19 are Cancelled.

1. (Amended) A wood cooking mixture comprising hardwood particles and a wood cooking aid, wherein the wood cooking aid comprises ~~comprising~~ a ~~blended mixture of~~ fatty acid component and a rosin acid component and/or salts thereof, and wherein said cooking aid comprises about 70 to about 2% fatty acids, ~~and~~ about 20 to about 98% rosin acids, and less than about 15%, saponifiable material.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said cooking aid comprises about 35 to about 80% rosin acids and about 55 to about 15% fatty acids.

4. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said rosin acids comprise tall oil rosin acids selected from the group consisting of abietic acid, dehydroabietic acid, palustric acid and all combinations thereof.

5. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said rosin acids comprise pimaric acid.

6. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids are selected from the group consisting of vegetable based fatty acids, animal based fatty acids, and all combinations thereof.

7. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids comprise unsaturated fatty acids.

8. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids comprise oleic acid, linoleic acid and/or pinolenic acid.

9. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids comprise branched fatty acids, conjugated fatty acids, synthetic fatty acids and/or cyclic fatty acids.

10. (Currently Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids comprise ~~the~~ a monomer part produced during dimerization of fatty acids.

11. (Currently Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of ~~claim 1~~ claim 10 wherein said monomer part contains branched oleic acids 13 to 20%, branched stearic acids 7 to 20%, oleic acid 15 to 25%, other fatty acids 28 to 58% the rest being unsaponifiable material.

12. (Currently Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of ~~claim 1~~ claim 10 wherein the fatty acid distribution of said monomer part is branched oleic acids about 14 to about 16%, branched stearic acid about 13 to about 15%, oleic acid about 19 to about 21%, other fatty acids about 42 to about 44%.

13. (Amended) The wood cooking ~~aid~~ mixture of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids and said rosin acids are derived from tall oil.

14. (Amended) The wood cooking aid of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids and said rosin acids comprise fractions of distilled tall oil.

15. (Amended) The wood cooking aid of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids comprise 5,11,14-C20:3 and 11,14-C20:2.

16. (Amended) The wood cooking aid of claim 1 wherein said fatty acids and said rosin acids are derived from distilled tall oil and/or tall oil rosin and/or tall oil fatty acids.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for making processing hardwood particles ~~the wood cooking aid of claim 1~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

contacting hardwood particles with a wood cooking aid, wherein the wood cooking aid comprises about 70 to about 2% fatty acids, ~~and~~ about 20 to about 98% rosin acids, and less than about 15%, saponifiable material

~~i) blending a fatty acid component with a rosin acid component to produce a fatty acid rosin acid mixture;~~

~~ii) reacting said fatty acid rosin acid mixture with water and sodium hydroxide to form salts of said acids~~.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) A method for cooking hardwood comprising the steps of:

i) contacting hardwood particles with a cooking liquor comprising a cooking aid, and

ii) heating said particles and liquor to a temperature between 140°C and 180°C

wherein said cooking aid comprises a blended mixture of about 70 to about 2% fatty acids, and about 20 to about 98% rosin acids and less than 15% unsaponifiable material.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20 wherein said hardwood is birch.